the production of sugar cane in the country during the last three years and the current year was as under:—

Sugar Season (October-September)	Production (in lakh M.Ts)
2002-2003	201.32
2003-2004	139.58
2004-2005) Provisional)	130.00
2005-2006 (Estimated)	181.67

(b) The Government have taken the following steps to increase the sugar production:—

(i) The Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) for 2005-06 has been fixed at Rs. 79.50 per quintal linked to a basic recovery of 9% subject to a premium of 88 paise for every 0.1% point increase in the recovery above that level.

(ii) Through effective release mechanism, better monthly open market realization was ensured for sugar mills, enabling them to clear cane arrears to the extent of 99.94% and as such, encouraged sugarcane farmers to increase sugarcane acreage and cultivation.

(c) Does not arise.

Wheat production and prices

†2449. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether production of wheat in rabi crop is expected to be less by 15-20 per cent in 2006;

(b) whether this may cause rise in the price of wheat; and

(c) if so, the details of measures to be taken to deal with such situation?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) No, Sir. As per the Second

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Advance estimates given by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, wheat production in crop year 2005-06 is expected to be 73.06 million tonnes as against 72 million tonnes last year.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Price increase of PDS rice and wheat

2450. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) how many times the prices of PDS rice and wheat enhanced after the present Government assumed power and the details thereof;

(b) the foodgrains allocated to Kerala for distributing to the BPL card-holders and the requirement prescribed by Government for each card-holder per month;

(c) whether any variations brought into the notice relating to the insufficiency of foodgrains allotment and actual BPL families in Kerala and whether any reduction of scale of distribution is maintained in Kerala to cover the existing BPL families; and

(d) whether Government consider to approve the BPL families identified by the State Government and allot the foodgrains to those families also?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) There has been no increase in prices of PDS rice and wheat since the present Government assumed power.

(b) 54,384 tonnes of foodgrains are allocated to the State of Kerala for 15.54 lakh Below Poverty Line (BPL), including Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), households per month. Foodgrains are allocated @35 kgs. per household per month for AAY, BPL and APL population of the State.

(c) and (d) A request was received from the Government of Kerala in which Government of India have been requested to approve the number of BPL households identified by the State Government and to make